(b) whether any discretionary quota is available to the Railway Minister for appointment of persons to these grades;

(c) if so, the total number of persons appointed to the Grade 'D' post regular and daily wages during the last three years, State-wise; and

(d) the number of persons so appointed to these grades from Bihar particularly in Maharashtra during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Various modes of appointment to Group 'D' posts on the railways are direct recruitment from open market, Scouts and Guides quota, Sports quota, Compassionate Ground appointment and engagement as Substitutes, etc.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (d) Do not arise.

Railway projects in Maharashtra

3159. SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a few projects of laying new railway lines, doubling the tracks and widening of existing lines in Maharashtra are pending;

(b) whether Government is aware of the request made by the leaders of political parties and the State Government of Maharashtra for providing adequate funds for ongoing railway projects in the State; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take for providing funds for the railway projects in Maharashtra as requested?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir. However the projects are being progressed as per availability of resources.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The funds for projects have improved considerably over last few years due to certain steps taken for getting additional funds through public private partnership, State sharing, funds for National Projects from Central Government exchequer, Defence funded and other projects under implementation by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited. State Government of Maharashtra has also agreed to share 50% cost of some of the projects.

Dilapidated condition of boggies in Kerala bound trains

3160. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Kerala bound trains have very old and damaged compartments;

(b) if not, the details of date of manufacture of each compartment used currently in Kerala Express, Trivandrum Rajdhani, Mangala Express, Millennium Express, Kochuveli

Sampark Kranti Express, Swarna Jayanthi Express, Parasuram Express and Jayanthi Janatha Express, train-wise;

(c) whether the toilets, floor and A.C. system in all these trains are very poor in maintenance; and

(d) the steps taken to remove all the old compartments from these trains and to improve the passenger amenities in them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Coaches with a prescribed codal life of 25 years are used in Passenger services on IR.

The approximate age profile of coaches running in these train services is as under:—

Age	Percentage
0-5 years	15
6-10 years	29
11-15 years	31
16-20 years	16
21-25 years	9

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The acquisition of new coaches for replacement of over-aged stock is a continuous activity for Indian Railways.

Maintenance and upkeep of passenger amenities in coaches is a continuing requirement and this is carried out periodically during laid down maintenance schedules in open line as well as periodic overhauls in the Railway Workshops. Besides, the coaches are also given 'Mid-life' rehabilitation after 12-15 years of usage.

Construction of Patan-Bhiladi missing link

3161. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether work relating to preparation of plan, estimates, etc. regarding construction of Patan-Bhiladi missing link in Gujarat has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the construction work would likely to be taken up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The alignment survey has been completed and detailed estimate sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 237.12 crore. The work of land acquisition and major bridges has been taken up.